

SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF CHAIRPERSONS
OCTOBER 15, 2012 – 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Jeffrey Pritchard, Bruce Fafard, Ed Stebbins, Raymond Munn, Ed Martin, David Williams, Brae Rafferty, Bob Ashworth, Dick Fitzgerald

Staff: Murphy, Norris, Schneider, Silsby

Others Present: Mark Oefinger, Jim Streeter, Rita Schmidt, Harry Watson, Hank Steinfeld, Dean Antipas, Wes Greenleaf, Deborah Peruzzotti

Acting Chairperson Pritchard called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

II. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Adoption of 2013 Meeting Schedule

MOTION: To adopt the 2013 Meeting Schedule, as presented

Motion made by Pritchard, seconded by Williams, so voted unanimously

2. Presentation of Energy Action Plan for the Town of Groton, by Peregrine Energy Group

Staff explained that the plan was paid for out of a \$198,000 state grant. He gave a recap as to what other projects were completed with these funds, which included the energy efficiency action plan. Details were given about the consultant search and the 4 elements that will be addressed in the plan. This information is available to the public and can be accessed on the Town's Website. Staff introduced the consultant, Steven Weisman. A question and answer session will occur throughout the presentation.

Steven Weisman, Vice President of Peregrine Energy Group, based in Boston, M.A., gave an overview of his company and distributed a handout. He stated that he has been working on this plan for approximately six (6) months. He explained the process, which included reviewing town policies and practices to see what impacts there might be on energy use by town government, schools, and the community at-large. He noted that the necessary funds for this project were received in part through the stimulus funding of energy efficiency and conservation block program. The plan is to create an energy plan to address mitigation and reduce green-house gas emissions, etc. The plan is to also create an energy baseline using FY2011 and 2012 data. Details were given about how this plan was prepared. Weisman reviewed the chart as he explained about BTU's and MMBTU's and cost comparisons and budget reductions. Weisman spoke about energy costs per town building.

Various questions from the audience were taken throughout the presentation. A discussion followed about the pros and cons of natural gas. Inquiries were made about the connection between energy and sea level rise.

Weisman believes that the Town has done a good job preparing for sea level rise and potential energy savings. Groton has taken a lot of actions to reduce energy use and reduce

greenhouse emissions. He believes that more organization would be useful to Groton as benchmarking in Groton has not been done. Tracking energy usage is also important.

An inquiry was made about the temperature inside town buildings and improving energy use. Weisman noted that some Groton schools are energy efficient primarily because equipment and lights are turned off immediately after students leave the buildings, though many schools still need improvement. He spoke about using the Energy Use Index (EUI) to measure energy use in different buildings. He noted that cost savings could be measured as well. Discussion ensued about realistic payback timeframes. He reviewed the differences and potential for savings in municipal buildings, which includes updating lighting with LED technology. As far as grant opportunities, it was noted that the availability of grants for energy efficient changes are limited.

Weisman recommended that Groton consider establishing quantitative goals for reducing energy use. An energy action plan would be needed to accomplish these goals. The POCD should be integrated and the elements of the energy efficiency plan should be included. The Town should create a staff committee-based group to accomplish these tasks. Weisman spoke about state/international building codes, which change over time. He recommended to do performance standards and to require a formal energy design review and commissioning for all building projects. A "commissioning" protocol means that all equipment is talking together and standards are being met. Weisman believes that the Town should offer strategies to encourage alternative energy resources. The NODAL Development Policy is a good example of sustainable practices.

Wes Greenleaf stated that lighting changes would have the quickest payback. He hopes to replace boilers in some school buildings. Comparisons of energy usage at different school buildings were given.

Weisman urged the town to create an energy action plan with accountability and create a committee to make decisions. He suggested that his recommendations be considered to confirm priorities, set measurable goals, and adopt strategies and options. He noted the importance of having a policy in alignment with goals, in order to have long-term success.

Discussion followed about using alternative energy sources, such as solar or geothermal. Weisman noted that using energy management as a tracking tool would be beneficial. Other energy sources were mentioned.

Staff thanked Mr. Weisman for his presentation. The plan will be finalized over the next couple weeks. The reporting schedule will need to be finalized with the DOT (grant process). Additional comments would still be welcome moving forward. He noted that timing is beneficial, as sustainability will be included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

III. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn was made by Williams, seconded by Ashworth, so voted unanimously at 8:00 p.m.

Prepared by: Robin M. Silsby
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OPDS